

# NRCS **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **First Sign-up for Conservation Security Program at Halfway Point**

Temple, TX July 20, 2004—The first Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up in 18 selected watersheds will continue through July 30, 2004. Agricultural producers in the [Hondo Watershed](#) who would like to apply can begin the application process online. The first step in participating in the program is to complete the CSP self-assessment that is available at your local NRCS office or online at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

CSP, a voluntary program that rewards ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of America's natural resources, is the newest program in a portfolio of tools available from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

"We see great potential for CSP as the program expands to more watersheds next year and beyond," NRCS Chief Bruce Knight said. "This innovative new program will reward agricultural producers for their overall conservation effort and will improve the condition of our natural resources for the public as a whole."

The self-assessment workbook helps producers identify whether their agricultural operation meets sign-up requirements and addresses minimum soil and water quality criteria. By completing the self-assessment, producers can determine their initial eligibility for CSP based on their land and operation. Producers who may not be eligible this year can find out about other programs that can help them achieve a higher level of conservation so that they may qualify for CSP in the future.

"In Texas farmers/ranchers in the Hondo covering portions of Medina, Uvalde, Frio and Bandera counties have shown interest in the program and the environmental benefits that conservation brings to all state residents," said Dr. Larry Butler, NRCS State Conservationist.

The online self-assessment is an interactive site that allows producers to log on and off at their convenience to complete the workbook at their own pace. The self-assessment also is available in hardcopy or compact disk (CD) from local NRCS offices in Hondo, Bandera, and Pearsall. Interested landowners can contact these offices for more information.

Additional information on CSP, including a fact sheet and sign-up notice detailing specific program requirements in the selected watersheds, is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp> or <http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/csp.html>

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